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Grand EID Gistories

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TASMIT AFIYAT ARNY TAKING STRIDES IN A FOREIGN LAND
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CHIKON JILAPI OR MOTA JILAPI – BANGI FOR IFTAR

PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN
MODEL: ABDULLAH AL MAHFUZ, SHIRIN AKTHER
SHEELA
WARDROBE: RINA LATIF
JEWELRY: AMISHEÈ
STYLING & FASHION DIRECTION: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
MAKEUP: SUMON RAHAT & TEAM

#MUSTREAD

Safe touch, unsafe touch: Why every child needs to learn this

In many Bangladeshi households, many parents hesitate to talk to their children about body safety. Conversations around personal boundaries and inappropriate touch are often avoided; however, silence does not protect children. In fact, it makes them more vulnerable. Teaching children about safe and



unsafe touch is not about making them fearful – it is about empowering them. It helps them understand their own bodies, recognise inappropriate behaviour, and speak up if they feel uncomfortable.

Breaking the silence

According to Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed, Professor of Child, Adolescent,

and Family Psychiatry, the lack of open discussion leaves children vulnerable to abuse. He informs, "In many cases, if a child tries to bring up concerns about inappropriate behaviour or discomfort, their concerns are ignored or dismissed. This lack of communication creates an unsafe environment for children, making them vulnerable."

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#WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Tasmit Afyiat Arny on reinventing Jamdani for the global bridal market

Beyond just being a fabric, Jamdani is a product of intricate craftsmanship and patience. Yet, this labour-intensive handwoven textile struggles to find its footing in a world driven by fast fashion and mass production. If Jamdani is to survive and thrive in the modern fashion landscape, it must evolve without compromising its authenticity. This is precisely the challenge that Tasmit Afyiat Arny, CEO, founder, and Creative Director of Stride Fashion Wear, has taken on with her latest wedding collection, Serenova.

A visionary approach to bridal couture
Operating under Anneal LLC in the USA, Stride Fashion Wear is committed to transforming traditional Bangladeshi textiles into modern luxury fashion. Arny's approach is pragmatic and market-driven.

"One major issue is that when we work with Jamdani, we often feel the need to 'force' customers into wearing it, instead of letting the fabric speak for itself. That's the challenge I took on – I wanted to create something with Jamdani that naturally integrates with the styles they already love. Think of a wedding gown where the fabric enhances the body's structure and allows the wearer to present themselves uniquely," she explains.

Serenova introduces Jamdani in a dusky white palette, chosen to symbolise serenity and renewal – core themes of a wedding. The name itself merges "Serena" (serenity)



and "Viva" (new beginnings), embodying elegance and cultural depth. By merging age-old craftsmanship with modern silhouettes, Serenova aims to appeal to contemporary brides and grooms who seek authenticity without sacrificing style.

Overcoming production challenges

Despite the enthusiasm for Jamdani-based bridal wear, production remains a major hurdle due to its time-intensive nature.

"The demand for new products is always unique in the industry. However, one major challenge we face is time. The process of creating these pieces takes longer, which is why wedding clients often don't have the patience to wait. They need things fast, but working at such speed isn't possible alone," Arny shares.

To address this, she has honed a deep familiarity with her designs to streamline production.

"If I have to accelerate the production process, I need to become deeply familiar with each design. Repetition makes things easier – once I get used to a design, it takes me just five minutes to get back into the flow after a pause."

Expanding global presence

Stride Fashion Wear has gained significant international recognition. Arny secured a 10-year contract in China following a successful showcase at World Fashion Week Shanghai, indicating a growing interest in sustainable luxury fashion in the region.

"At the same time, in this market, customers are willing to pay more for quality products in the USA. I'm utilising this opportunity – not to downplay their work, but just to highlight my approach."

Following this success, Stride is preparing for an exclusive Miami fashion show to further cement Jamdani's place in high-end bridal fashion.

"My main goal is to establish Jamdani as a sought-after fabric in the international market. I can already see the demand growing – most of my clients are now from the USA and UK. The moment I upload a new design, I get immediate orders. In fact, I received ten US-based orders almost instantly after my last launch."

Arny is keenly aware that appreciation for textiles varies across cultures, making education a key part of her work.

"Even in the fashion industry, there's a knowledge gap – similar to how different materials like clay, ceramic, or metal evoke different responses. We, as designers, understand this because it's part of our craft. The same applies to Jamdani – it has immense potential, but it's still considered expensive and time-consuming to produce. That's why we need to adapt and create designs efficiently."

By tailoring Jamdani-based designs to fit contemporary tastes, Arny aims to ensure this fabric becomes an integral part of global fashion rather than a niche luxury item.

A commitment to sustainable growth

Arny's journey into global fashion began with rickshaw art-inspired jackets, which received an unexpected yet enthusiastic response from international buyers.

"My first venture into the US market happened when I introduced rickshaw-painted jackets. A foreign customer bought one from me despite the Bangladeshi slang written all over it. She told me, 'I don't care what it says—I just love these colourful patterns!' That moment showed me the power of our traditional designs on a global stage."

This experience reinforced Arny's belief that traditional Bangladeshi textiles can resonate with global consumers if presented in the right way.

By bridging tradition with modernity – similar to Tasmit Afyiat Arny – designers and industry leaders can equally redefine the global perception of Jamdani, making it more than just a fabric of the past, but an essential textile for the future.

By Ayman Anika

Photography: Shahnawaj Anik

Model: Fabliha Khan, Nishat Tasnim

Anika, Korde Inniss

Wardrobe: Stride

Styling & Direction: Tasmit Afyiat Arny

Makeover: Ripan Mia



Shine brighter this Eid with Bata Starlight!

Step into the festive spirit with the Bata Starlight collection, a unique new catalogue designed to add elegance and charm to your Eid celebrations. Whether embracing timeless classics or modern chic, this latest collection ensures that you dazzle with every step as you celebrate the occasion with your loved ones.

The Bata Starlight collection showcases a stunning range of new arrivals, featuring trendsetting heels in captivating colours



with crystal accents, stylish mules with modern uppers, and shimmering, technology-infused Comfit sandals designed for ultimate comfort and elegance for the ladies. **Every pair in this exquisite line is thoughtfully created to ensure you not only step in style but also experience unparalleled ease.**

For men, the collection offers a variety of dress shoes, moccasins, fisherman sandals, and other fashionable summer styles, complemented by an exclusive leather range that perfectly captures the spirit of Eid celebrations. **Whether you prefer a classic, polished look or a more laid-back, contemporary appeal, there is something for every fashion-forward individual looking to make a statement this season.**



family, or simply taking a quiet stroll, Bata's well-crafted shoes promise to keep you at ease.

Bata offers trendy shoes with modern technologies including Memory Foam, Ortholite Cushioning, Life Anti-bacterial properties with a lightweight feature etc., **making every step feel like a dream. With innovative comfort solutions seamlessly blended into stylish designs, Bata ensures that you do not have to choose between fashion and functionality.**

So, whether you are heading out for Eid prayers, gathering with family for a grand meal, or catching up with friends, Bata's stylish and comfortable footwear from Starlight Collection ensures you do it all with confidence.

Besides 2500+ unique designs and a selection of 1000+ newly dropped styles especially for this Eid, Bata's online platform — Batabd.com — now boasts exciting weekly flash deals and free shipping catering to the increasing demands of online customers. **With just a few clicks, you can browse and shop from the comfort of your home, ensuring a hassle-free experience.**

Over 250 Bata outlets across the country are also awaiting your footfall. With welcoming store environments and helpful staff ready to assist, your shopping experience is bound to be as enjoyable as the celebration itself.

So, hurry up, and grab your pair of Starlight, today!

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Starlight
collection

SCAN FOR
NEW COLLECTION

Bata
MAKE YOUR WAY

#FASHION&BEAUTY

Why deshi products deserve a spot on your Eid shopping list



The shopping list always starts small, maybe with just a new outfit for Eid and a gift or two for loved ones. But before you even realise it, the cart is overflowing, your wallet is lighter, and somehow, half the things in your bags are imported. It might not be intentional; it just happens. But have you ever paused to think, what if this year, we went a little more *deshi*?

Maybe it's time we do. After all, homegrown things of our local craftsmen, along with adding aesthetics to our lives, bring a piece of our own heritage into our homes and wardrobes that resonates with our identity and culture in a way that feels perfect. It's in the tiny details, the human touch, the authenticity and the imperfections that make them perfect.

Long before fast fashion and mass-produced items blurred the line between quality and convenience, our local artisans have been crafting, for centuries, from locally resourced raw materials. Be it the handwoven Jamdani saree carrying the history of century-old traditions or the khadi panjabi that besides looking elegant lets our skin breathe, blends with our weather, our culture, and our way

of life so effortlessly that no synthetic imported garments can ever replace.

Besides clothing, our homes deserve the same consideration. A handwoven shatranji from Rangpur under the tea table, a jute basket casually sitting in the corner, or a piece of nakshi kantha thrown over the couch add warmth and aesthetic to your living room that imported items never can. There's a different kind of pride in knowing that the intricate patterns on your cushion cover were not printed by a machine but embroidered by a skilled hand from our own land.

Still, somehow, most of us instinctively end up purchasing imported products, thinking they offer better value. While mass-produced items might seem affordable, even cheaper, at first glance, in terms of quality, uniqueness and authenticity they rarely stand out. And as more people choose homegrown products, production scales up, making them even more accessible and budget-friendly.

It's a cycle, one that benefits both artisans and consumers alike!

Every time we buy locally produced items, we are not just consuming, we are making a statement. We are supporting the local artisans, and small businesses that keep our culture and years of tradition alive so that our artisans do not have to abandon their craft for other works just to make ends meet. We are also giving back to the people who pour their heart and soul into crafting something uniquely ours.

So, this Eid, while you are hopping stores or scrolling through online catalogues, maybe take a moment to consider: A Rajshahi silk saree perhaps feels more elegant than a mass-produced sequin dress. A khadi panjabi probably holds more meaning than an anonymous, factory-made synthetic one. Just a thought!

By Rehnuma Shahreen

Photo: Tangail Saree Kutir

TANGAIL SAREE KUTIR
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Hotline: 01815785059, 01324414660

TSK
SINCE 1907



A floral fiesta for EID

PANJABIS WITH A MODERN TWIST

Today, designers are boldly incorporating floral motifs into panjabis, reimagining traditional silhouettes with bright and lively prints. Colours such as a light green or blue infused with intricate floral patterns in cheerful pinks or reds add sophistication while maintaining an inviting, festive vibe.

Loved by the youth and not too adventurous for a middle-aged male, floral designs for men are all about artistic vision and unapologetic personal style.

The versatility of the floral panjabi makes it suitable for various gatherings, whether it be a casual family Eid dinner or a more formal event. Paired with traditional khussas or modern loafers, a floral panjabi is not just an outfit, it's a statement of confidence.

KAMEEZES: A FUSION OF TRADITION AND TREND

The not-so-humble kameez, often paired with shalwar or churidar, continues to be an undisputed choice for women during Eid. Taking on a number of contemporary renditions such as the Anarkali, or koti styles, this classic garment seems to have been given the kiss of life through floral trends this year. From delicate, pastel blossoms to bolder, more attractive designs, designers are going all out on



As Eid approaches, the excitement for festive attire builds. This year, floral patterns are blooming in every corner of the fashion world — delightful motifs bringing a fresh and vibrant touch to traditional, and non-traditional garments. From panjabis and kurtis to sarees and even dresses, floral designs are making a statement.

florals — to the customers' utter delight!

While floral patterns on the body of the kameez have always been hailed as a classic, flowers this year also enjoy centre space in the sleeves, hemlines, and necklines, as laces, fringes and more.

Women can opt for a full floral ensemble, such as a layered, overcoat look, with big prints or a matching dupatta in net or sheer organza, incorporating subtle floral accents.

SAREES: DRAPING FLORAL ELEGANCE

No festive occasion in Bangladesh is complete without the saree — a garment that embodies grace, femininity, and intricate craftsmanship in its nine yards. This Eid, floral patterns dominate collections too, featuring sarees from light, airy chiffon adorned with soft floral prints to heavier silk ones with bigger, more elaborate patterns. Aisles and aisles of floral sarees in an array of styles rule the malls, catering to diverse tastes across generations.

This year, soft, pastel colours, such as peach, aqua, sea foam and butter yellow have been seen to provide a serene backdrop for floral patterns. Evoking a sense of serenity, and keeping in mind the weather during Eid time, designers have chosen hues that make these sarees perfect for daytime celebrations. On the other hand, richer shades such as dark blue, charcoal grey and black infuse the right kind of energy for evening gatherings.

From organza to silk and nakshi kantha, designers have played around with sarees and blouses, taking care to keep at least one of the two plain, for a

cleaner contrast. Paired with statement jewellery, floral sarees become stunning focal points.

DRESSES: EMBRACING NATURE IN FASHION

Floral dresses have reigned supreme in the fashion world for decades. Not new by any means, these timeless pieces are a seamless blend of femininity and style. Characterised by vibrant prints of flowers and greenery, these dresses come in various styles, from breezy sundresses, perfect for summer picnics, to slinky silks for formal occasions,

Known to symbolise romance and vibrancy, floral dresses are a popular choice for weddings and outdoor parties. Whether adorned with large, statement blooms or more intricate patterns, floral dresses continue to be celebrated for their ability to bring joy and a touch of nature into everyday wear.

Floral patterns are not merely trends; they are emotional connections to the natural world, celebrations of summer, and symbols of joy that resonate with the much-awaited festival of Eid. This year, as families come together to celebrate, floral garments serve as a reminder of the blooming joy and love that defines this special occasion.

By Munira Fidai

Photo: Adnan Rahman

Model: Abdullah Al Mahfuz, Shirin

Akther Sheela

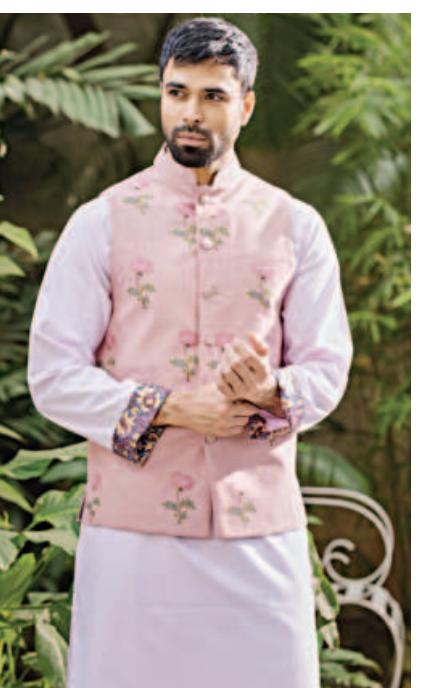
Wardrobe: Rina Latif

Jewelry: Amishee

Styling & Fashion Direction: Sonia

Yeasmin Isha

Makeup: Sumon Rahat & Team



Ramadan away from home

LIFE AS IT IS

WARA KARIM

Writer, painter, gardener, content creator
Website: <http://www.scratchingout.com>



Leaving home is often an inevitable part of life. A vast number of Bangladeshis leave their homeland every year to pursue work and higher education abroad. While these expatriates miss "home" every day of the year, they miss it even more during Ramadan, when a festive atmosphere permeates the nation. Most Bangladeshis fast from dawn until sunset, gather with friends and family, and make preparations for Eid-ul-Fitr. We spoke to the Bangladeshi diaspora spread across the globe to learn what they miss and how they observe Ramadan away from home.

Haseen Cherry, Oxford, United Kingdom

Haseen Cherry is a senior scientist and head of applications at Bio-Rad Laboratories, Inc. She moved to the UK twenty years ago. She recounted her experience of observing Ramadan in Bangladesh.

"Although the holy month of Ramadan was primarily about fasting, praying, reciting the Holy Quran, and giving Zakat, the true essence of Ramadan transcended these practices," she said.

Cherry recalls that in the early morning, a band of volunteers would walk in their neighbourhood and sing "Sehri-r shomoy holo jaago mumkin/ Rahmat er bhaagi hote jaago mumkin" to rouse people from their deep sleep. The tune of the Islamic song still lingers in her mind even after decades.

She also recalls that exchanging iftar with neighbours was a common practice. "Exchanging iftar with neighbours was a daily practice back in the day. I remember running to the houses of our neighbours with trays full of food and making sure that all of it was distributed before the siren from the mosques went off."

However, Ramadan in her life in the UK is not as joyous as she grew up experiencing. Life abroad is busy and often, solitary.

However, Cherry brings home the joy of sharing a communal iftar by inviting her Muslim friends over to her place on weekends.

Farhan Reza, Shanghai, China

Farhan Reza is a finance professional working at a multilateral development bank headquartered in Shanghai, China. This is Reza and his family's first Ramadan away from home and he says that he misses the iftar and sehri announcements that play from Dhaka's mosques during Ramadan time. Reza also misses the iftar gatherings with his colleagues.

"In Dhaka, my colleagues and I would have iftar gatherings almost every week. This is something I miss here in Shanghai," he said.

Unlike in Bangladesh, where there is a special Ramadan working routine, in non-Muslim majority countries, it is life as usual.

"In Bangladesh, you have reduced working hours during the month of Ramadan. Here, it is business as usual, so it is challenging to have iftar at home on working days, especially at this time of the year when the sun sets early," Reza said.

Fatima Ferdousi, Sydney, Australia

Fatima Ferdousi is an analytics manager at one of the Big Four banks of Australia. During the month of Ramadan, Ferdousi misses Dhaka's iftar delicacies as well as the iftar time ambience.

"I miss having chola, peyaju, and haleem for iftar," she said. "Although I try to make traditional iftar items on weekends, it does not happen on a daily basis."

As Maghrib in Sydney is now at around 7.30, which is past the family's usual dinner time, Fatima and her family break their fast with light appetisers followed by a proper *deshi* dinner.

"For sehri, I just take a cup of milk and a banana," she said.

"My 11-year-old son, however, likes to eat rice for his sehri, and I think if we observed Ramadan in Dhaka, he would have loved eating the steaming rice that his *nanu* would have freshly prepared for him," she added.

Ferdousi shared with us how her workplace accommodates Muslim employees; they have separate prayer rooms for men and women and even special arrangements to perform wudu.

"The prayer rooms at my bank are modelled after the prayer rooms you will see at Malaysian workplaces," Ferdousi, who lived and worked in Malaysia before moving to Australia a decade ago, said.

"My previous workplace here in Australia also had a proper prayer room for its employees," she added. "I think this sort of inclusiveness boosts employee morale and productivity."



mutton biriyani, haleem, or nihari to the iftar spread," she said. "On weekends, we try to go to an Indian, Pakistani, or Arab restaurant to enjoy iftar."

Zahra, her husband, and their three children say the Maghrib prayer together during this month of Ramadan. "My husband leads the prayer and my children love seeing their father in the role of an imam," she said.

Zahra misses the month-long festive atmosphere that envelops the country at this time of the year. She misses fasting as a community and the delicious Ramadan delicacies sold by iftar vendors.

"I also miss Dhaka's Eid shopping scene, when shops and malls across the country are bedecked with string lights, festoons, streamers, hanging swirls, and whatnot, adding extra joy to Eid preparations," she said.

"Here in the US, I also miss Bangladesh's long Eid holidays and I miss visiting my grandparents, uncles, and aunts to exchange Eid greetings," she added.

However, in her new reality thousands of miles away from Bangladesh, Zahra tries to observe Ramadan and celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr in her own way. Surrounded by her three children, she decorates the house with Ramadan and Eid-themed décor to bring holiday vibes to her home in America.

"We also prepare iftar platters for our Muslim friends and neighbours to share the joy of Ramadan. We visit malls with friends to buy Eid clothes and arrange a mehendi night the day before Eid," Zahra said.

The Bangladeshi diaspora misses the tantalising aroma of masala chickpeas, crispy lentil fritters, and warm-moist *jlapi* that wafted across the house at sundown. They miss the melodious voice of the local muezzin and his call to Maghrib prayer, and they miss gathering around the dinner table with their families to break fast with bites of Arabian dates. However, life goes on; they gradually adapt to their new surroundings, observing Ramadan in their own unique ways.

By Wara Karim
Photo: Collected

Safe touch, unsafe touch: Why every child needs to learn this

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Abuse is not always committed by strangers; in most cases, it comes from someone the child knows and trusts. Without guidance,

Children may not recognise when something is wrong, and even if they do, they may not feel safe enough to speak up. This is why body safety education needs to begin early and be woven naturally into everyday conversations.

Using the right language

One of the biggest mistakes parents make is using euphemisms instead of the correct names for body parts. This can lead to confusion and make it difficult for children to report inappropriate behaviour. Dr Ahmed emphasises the importance of clear and accurate language: "We must first clarify certain fundamental differences in terminology. When talking about body parts, we often find that the correct anatomical names are not always used; instead, alternative or euphemistic names are introduced."

He says, adding, "This, however, should

be avoided. Children must learn the accurate names for their body parts in their own language from an early age, which can help to foster a sense of ownership over their personal space and privacy."

When children can confidently name their body parts, they are less likely to be manipulated or silenced. They should also be taught that their private areas are their own, and no one should touch them unless it's for a valid reason, like a doctor's check-up with a parent's permission.

Teaching boundaries through everyday moments

Conversations about safe and unsafe touch do not have to be formal. Simple reminders during bath time, dressing, or bedtime – like "Your body belongs to you, and you can always say no if something feels wrong" – can reinforce bodily autonomy.

Dr Ahmed highlights the "Underwear Rule", which teaches children that private areas – covered by undergarments – should not be touched by others.

"Establishing clear boundaries from a young age helps children recognise

inappropriate behaviour and seek help when necessary," he explains.

Children should also know that secrets about body safety are never okay. If someone tells them, "Don't tell your parents" — that is a red flag.

Boys are at risk too

A common misconception in our society is that only girls need protection. This belief is dangerous. Boys can also be victims of abuse and because of societal expectations, they may feel even more pressure to stay silent.

Dr Ahmed emphasises, "Another common misconception is that only girls are vulnerable to abuse. Research, conducted globally, shows that one in four girls faces some form of abuse. However, this does not mean that boys are safe from harm. The belief that boys are not at risk is a dangerous misconception that needs to be addressed."

Every child, regardless of gender, needs to learn about body safety. Parents must reassure their sons that if they ever feel uncomfortable or unsafe, they have the

right to speak up.

Creating a safe space for communication
Perhaps, the most important step parents can take is to create an environment where children feel safe to talk. A child who knows they will be listened to is more likely to report something wrong. However, many parents in Bangladesh do not know how to have these conversations.

Dr Ahmed emphasises that awareness programmes should focus not only on children but also on parents, helping them communicate about body safety in a sensitive, age-appropriate way.

Above all, the most effective way to prevent abuse is through education, open communication, and creating safe spaces for children to express themselves. The more we talk, the safer our children will be. As parents, teachers, and caregivers, we must break the silence because an informed child is a protected child.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Collected

A Bangladeshi woman's guide to modern self-loathing

MIND THE GAP

NOSHIN NAWAL

Barrister Noshin Nawal is an activist, feminist and a columnist with a knack for sharp, satirical takes on social and societal issues. She can be reached at nawalnoshin1@gmail.com.



Ah, the eternal struggle of trying to lose weight. Forget inflation, Dhaka traffic, or even climate change — your weighing scale's number is apparently the most urgent crisis facing today's society. It starts early. As a child, your parents beam with pride when you devour your fourth plate of pulao roast because of "growing age". But puberty hits, and suddenly the same parents are *critical, offensive, and side-eyeing* your growing thighs and saying things like, "I was never this chubby at your age!"

The sofa becomes a measuring tape for how much space you are taking up, and somewhere between childhood and adolescence, you learn that you will never quite be good enough.

By your twenties, the self-loathing is a full-blown companion. Friends, relatives, and random aunties have endless advice. "Try keto," someone suggests, as if butter-drenched steak is magically going to fit into your grocery budget!

Another genius pipes up, "Just stop eating rice," because that's the solution to all of life's

grace of a flailing octopus.

Then there's dieting, which is a disaster from the get-go. The day you decide to "eat clean", everything starts smelling like biriyani and the sound of falling rain is reminiscent of chicken being deep fried.

You heroically skip rice and snack on sad rice cakes smeared with peanut butter, only for your mother to announce concern over your lack of appetite and inquire if you have fallen prey to drug abuse. This is the same woman who slips an extra puri onto your plate while casually reminding you, "At this rate, kono chele pabi na."

As wedding season rolls in, you undertake keto — a brand of torture. You are told it's the ultimate weight-loss hack, but after a week of eating butter-laden eggs, you are fantasising about a single spoonful of daal.

When you dare to complain, some keto veteran chimes in, "It



with crumbs on your chin, Googling "How much damage does one pizza do?"

Your friends, who swear they "don't even diet," conveniently forget to mention they have been surviving on lemon water and air since 2018.

Winter? A whole new level of trauma. Relatives transform into body-shaming Olympics judges, scanning you up and down before dropping gems like, "You'll never fit into a lehenga if you keep this up." If you dare to wear a saree, someone will comment on how the pleats are doing your hips no favours. And God forbid you eat at the buffet — one plate is all it takes for someone to ask, "Are you really going for seconds?"

And then comes the universal truth:

You heroically skip rice and snack on sad rice cakes smeared with peanut butter, only for your mother to announce concern over your lack of appetite and inquire if you have fallen prey to drug abuse. This is the same woman who slips an extra puri onto your plate while casually reminding you, "At this rate, kono chele pabi na."

problems. Meanwhile, you're dealing with prediabetes at 25 from years of stress-eating desserts, and the concept of intuitive eating. Non-existent. Let's not even talk about the fact that eating disorders are still seen as some kind of Western nonsense.

You decide to hit the gym, and oh boy, what a journey. The trainer looks you up and down like a mechanic inspecting a broken-down car and declares, "You need a fat-loss plan. Let's start with a three-year programme".

Three years? You might as well grow old with carbs. And the gym itself? It's a jungle — sweaty men grunting, hogging all the equipment, and occasionally staring at you while you attempt the StairMaster with the

works if you stick to it. I lost eight kilos but fainted once. No big deal — it's part of the process." PART OF THE PROCESS? Excuse me, but when did fainting become a fitness milestone?

Failing at keto, your next bff hoves into existence — intermittent fasting. Even worse. You're told it is "life-changing," but no one warns you about the hanger. By the time your fast ends, you're ready to inhale the entire fridge. One time, after breaking my fast with a "healthy" smoothie, my dad stared at me like I'd committed a crime. "Isn't that too sweet? What's the point of fasting if you're going to eat like that?"

Then there's Instagram, the land of perfect bodies and even more perfect lies. Influencers flaunt flat abs under captions like, "No pain, no gain #BlessedLife #NoFilter." Meanwhile, you're sitting in bed

you can never win. Lose weight, and people call you "too skinny"—a skeleton with no "healthy glow." Gain a little, and you are immediately labelled lazy.

It does not matter how successful, talented, or intelligent you are. Society will always find a way to reduce you to a number on a scale and a set of measurements.

So, here we are, juggling impossible standards and wondering why our worth is tied to an ever-shifting goalpost. If I could have one wish, it would be this: to take all the unsolicited opinions, wrap them up in the gym's sweaty towels, and throw them into Dhaka traffic. Maybe then, we would finally have some peace.

By Noshin Nawal
Photo: Collected



Lotto & Lee Cooper's GRAND EID CELEBRATION

Celebrate the festive spirit with the exclusive Eid special collection from globally renowned Italian brand Lotto and British brand Lee Cooper! Enhancing the elegance and appeal of Eid celebrations, Lotto and Lee Cooper present a vibrant and diverse range of designs in their brand-new Eid special catalogue. Whether you prefer classics or modern stylish trends, this Eid collection by Lotto and Lee Cooper will captivate customers at every step of their festive journey.

FOR HER

Lotto's new Eid collection features exquisitely designed sports slippers, sandals, and sports shoes in vibrant colours, ensuring maximum comfort and elegance.

Meanwhile, *Lee Cooper*'s latest Eid collection introduces trendsetting heels and dazzling, tech-based comfort sandals, designed to offer both sophistication and supreme comfort.

FOR HIM

Lotto's collection includes advanced performance shoes, sports lifestyle shoes, running and jogging shoes, sports slippers, slides, and sports sandals, perfect for staying active during the festive season. Additionally, the men's collection features stylish and trendy tech-enhanced tracksuits, trousers, polo shirts, t-shirts, and other fashion essentials.

On the other hand, *Lee Cooper* offers a



variety of dress shoes, moccasins, slippers, thongs, and fashionable summer styles that perfectly embody the essence of Eid celebrations. The collection also includes stylish and trendy jeans, gabardines, formal and casual shirts, polo shirts, T-shirts, belts, and other fashion apparel.

Both *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper* are universal European lifestyle brands, offering a diverse selection of products for every member of the family.

EXCLUSIVE EID OFFERS

To make this Eid even more exciting, *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper* are offering an exclusive *Eid Dhamaka Offer!* With every purchase of Tk 2,000, customers receive a scratch card, guaranteeing a gift. Some lucky shoppers may even receive a second pair of shoes for free with their purchase.

Additionally, *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper* are offering cashback and discount deals on

various payment platforms, including bank cards and mobile wallets.

Every *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper* shoe is crafted with meticulous attention to detail, using only the finest materials and the latest technology to ensure superior comfort and durability. From Eid prayers to cherished moments with family and friends, *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper*'s stylish and comfortable Eid special collection ensures you can celebrate every occasion with confidence and ease.

With over 500 new designs and styles, the *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper* online platform ExpressHub is also offering exciting Eid special discounts and free shipping, catering to the growing demands of online shoppers.

Visit any of the 220+ *Lotto* and *Lee Cooper* outlets across the country and explore a world of fashion, style, and comfort this festive season!



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#HUMOUR

Why do all fathers have a love for bangi?

Some mysteries of the universe will still remain mysteries. What came first - the chicken or the egg? And, why are fathers so obsessed with bangi? For our fathers, bangi is not just a fruit, it's an emotion, a legacy, a part of their soul, whereas for our generation, it's a fruit that tastes like sadness.

Fathers have an unbreakable bond with bangi. During the month of Ramadan, they head to the bazaar for jilapi or halim just before iftaar, but somehow return holding a bangi. You open the door, and your father enters, super proud, gently putting the bangi on the table, expecting admiration from each family member. Instead, we stare at it in horror.

Pin-drop silence stays for a while, we hear crickets chirping in our minds.

Fathers break the silence, "What a gorgeous colour! It was the brightest among all." We're not quite sure why we should be excited about its pale yellow colour.

"Baba, why?" we ask in frustration, the trauma of last year's bangi encounters still fresh in our minds.

Their disappointment is immediate. Thunder rumbles in the background, just like in old Bengali movies. Their gaze turns melancholic as if we have rejected our entire family heritage.

"You guys rush to eat unlimited pizza and burgers as soon as Ramadan comes, but when it comes to healthy food, your generation never feels like having it." Yes, Baba, because our dislike for bangi is what's truly ruining this generation.



Fast forward to iftaar time, Fathers sit with their plates, slicing bangi with a knife, chewing dramatically, and making exaggerated "Bah" noises. They look at us with their softest version of voices possible, "It's delicious, try it." We take the disappointing bites while they watch us like owls.

Emotional dialogues start immediately, "I went through all that trouble to bring this, and now you're refusing to eat it?"

Mothers join the chat, adding spices to the conversation, "Do you know how good bangi is for your health?" Ah yes, the classic dialogue - if it's healthy, we

must eat it, no matter how miserable it makes us. No, Ma, it might be healthy, but it isn't a cure for everything, especially not for our depression at the moment.

The unfinished bangi laughs at us, preparing for another face-off tomorrow. It knows it has won today, and it waits for the next day, when our father will push the last slices towards us once again, saying, "It's still fresh though."

The next day, You go to your friend's house, to avoid the trauma of the previous day. Finally, a

place where bangi does not exist. A fresh start. A new life.

With a sigh of relief, you enter the house. But then... You freeze. There it is, sitting right on the table.

Your friend's father starts, "I bought the bangi just for you guys today. Isn't the colour gorgeous? I got the best..."

Sigh! **Why do all fathers have a love for bangi?**

By Jawwad Sami Neogi

Photo: Collected



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#REVIEW

The great jilapi debate: Chikon vs. mota



Have you ever thought about how jilapi manages to divide a nation? If you haven't, then let us push you to think that way. Despite sharing the same fundamental ingredients of ghee, flour, and sugar, jilapi, with its two swirly variations, has somehow become the most controversial item on the iftar table. Just drop a mota jilapi into the murimakha and watch the chikon jilapi lovers storming out like an opposition party boycotting a parliamentary session. But let's not go into politics now; today we are here to shed light on this age-old debate of chikon vs. mota jilapi!

To understand the pulse of this debate better, we have asked some jilapi loyalists for their takes. The results? A swirly explosion of opinions!

"Chikon jilapi fried in ghee is the real deal. It's crunchy and does not feel like you are chewing on a rolled-up sponge," argues chikon jilapi loyalist, Ismot Hasnine. "Mota jilapi is for people who don't understand jilapi. It's like choosing a sweater in the summer—completely unnecessary!"

Hasnine's friend Rakibul Islam, a health-conscious individual, is also rallying behind chikon jilapi. "If I'm going to have something deep-fried and sugary, at least let it have some structural integrity," says Rakibul. "Mota Jilapi just collapses under its weight, like my willpower in front of a plate of biriyani!"

Jemim, a seasonal writer and student, says, "Thick jilapi is just fried dough pretending to be dessert. True jilapi should have an airy crisp, a delicate crunch that melts in your mouth — not sit in your stomach like an edible brick."

Biva, a student says, "Chikon Jilapi is like poetry in a spiral—light, delicate, and doesn't make me feel guilty after eating five—or ten," says Biva. "I absolutely love it with rabri."

Now, on the other side of the battlefield, mota jilapi fans scoff at the so-called "crunch revolution" of chikon jilapi!

"Chikon jilapi? That's just a brittle excuse for dessert!" says Nusrat Shahana, who firmly believes bigger is better. "A real jilapi should be fat, juicy, and unapologetically soaked in shira (syrup). If your fingers aren't sticky, are you even

eating jilapi?" Shahana says.

Then there's Hasan, a banker who swears by the slow enjoyment of a thick jilapi. "Chikon jilapi is over too quickly! Mota jilapi is an experience. You take a bite, you chew, you let the syrup melt in your mouth—it's practically therapy!" he declares.

"Mota jilapi is real substance, not just crispy air! Mota jilapi gives you something to chew on—literally!" says Tanvir, a snack champion!

Even children are in on the debate. "Chikon jilapi breaks too quickly! I like how mota jilapi lasts longer," says little Ayaan, with a mouth full of syrup.

Who knew that a simple concoction of sugar syrup, ghee, flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and an ungodly amount of oil could ignite such a passionate rivalry? There are accusations of moral superiority on both sides — mota jilapi lovers call their rivals superficial, chasing empty aesthetics over real taste.

Chikon jilapi fans retaliate by calling the other side lazy, and unwilling to appreciate culinary craftsmanship. Meanwhile, the undecided few simply eat whatever jilapi is available, watching the debate unfold with amusement.

So, where do you stand in this swirly debate? Are you Team Chikon or Team Mota? Or are you the rare soul who believes all jilapis deserve equal love? Whether thick or thin, soaked or crispy, one thing is for certain: no jilapi escapes the ultimate fate of being devoured!

By Jannatul Bushra

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



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